
CURRENT TOPICS SERIES No. 11

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

APPASAMY.



PADMA PUBLICATION

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No 11

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

BY

Dr. A J. APPASAMY

Author of

CHRISTIANITY AS BHAKTI MARGA, WHAT IS MOKSHA ?,
TEMPLE BELLS, CHRIST IN THE INDIAN CHURCH, THE
GOSPEL AND INDIA'S HERITAGE AND
THE SADIHU

(Jointly with Cannon Streeter)



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A J Appasamy

CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
I By way of Introduction	7
II Produce More Food	12
III How Cottage Industries Help	20
IV Buy and sell Co-operatively	. 27
V A Rural Basis to Education 33
VI From Literacy to Knowledge	. 40
VII The Leisure Hours	. 47
VIII The Amenities of Life	. 52
IX The Training of Rural Workers	. 59



HEND DRAKSO MALT

An ★
IDEAL DIGESTIVE
TONIC FOR MEN
WOMEN & CHILDREN ★

★
ENRICHES BLOOD
INCREASES STRENGTH
ADDS VIGOUR
& VITALITY ★

PREFACE

By : Lalita Kumarappa

We, in India, have several major problems to solve before we can take our rightful place in the world as one of the major nations and powers. Despite the fact that our country is rich in natural resources, we are poor! Why is this? For centuries before the advent of British rule in India, our villages were isolated but self-sufficient economic units with standing arrangements to satisfy *all* their requirements. There was a complete division of labour and the village economy was "balanced" owing to a sufficiently large number of the villagers finding employment in other occupations and crafts. Occasionally, internal peace was disturbed by internecine wars and foreign invasions, and sometimes devastating famines swept the land. But on the whole, the people were busy, contented and happy.

Then came various conquests which subjugated us, and from which yoke we have not yet been able to free ourselves. Our mineral wealth was exploited, our cottage industries choked, and agriculture deteriorated owing to various influences, and the cultivator—whether a tenant or holder—has been living in a deficit economy and meeting his family expenditure by borrowing. Since 1875 the rural debt of India has been rising. In 1911 it was Rs 300 crores, and today it is Rs 1,200 crores! Only 25% of cultivators are free of debt, or lightly burdened.

To add to all this, our masses are uneducated, and our food problem still unsolved! Contrary to popular belief, though vast quantities of cereals such as rice and wheat are grown here, they are not enough to feed 4 000 000 000 hungry millions, as much of this is exported hence we are obliged to import those very staples, which we need at much higher prices. According to Dr Mukerji's calculations the aggregate supply of food grain in 1931 was 60.1 million tons, yielding 215.4 billion calories or energy as against the country's minimum requirements of 292 billion calories. Thus in the place of a surplus of 18 billion calories (which the balance of 5 million tons of grain would yield) in 1880 we find a deficit of no less than 77 billion calories in 1931. Even after adding to this the amount of energy contributed by other food stuff such as milk and fish, there still remains a deficit of 42 billion calories. Thus in 1931 the food supply in India was enough only for 292 millions as a result of which 48 millions or 14% of the population had no food left for them. But this takes for granted ideal conditions with good rainfall everywhere. Not always so in reality. The real extent of food shortage and of the resulting malnutrition is revealed in a survey made about nine years ago by Sir John Megaw who was then the highest medical authority under the Government of India. Six hundred doctors under his direction, settled in all parts of the country found that 39% of the people were adequately fed, 41% poorly so and 20% "very badly nourished" indeed!

During the last quarter of the nineteenth century

18 famines swept away 26 million lives, and various epidemics took a toll of 36 millions during the first two decades of the present century. Though India has the second largest population in the world (China being first), yet the rate of increase of our population is very low, when compared to the growth in other countries. Between 1870 and 1931 the population of England increased by 77%, of Japan by 113%, of Russia by 115%, of the U.S.A. by 125%, as against *only 31% in respect of India* ! Factors contributing to our terrific mortality rate are : high infant and maternal mortality owing to poor nutrition, lack of proper medical care, unclean midwifery, and unhealthy living surroundings; adolescent mortality due to tuberculosis; epidemics which ravage the land, deficiency diseases, poor sanitation, and a dirty supply of drinking water. It is also true that barring the cities, India is woefully bereft of adequate medical facilities throughout the country. Hence all these need our special attention.

Dr. A. J. Appasamy is well qualified to write on this subject of rural reconstruction, as he has not only made a close study of it, but is running one such centre, while he has visited others in different parts of the country. Thinking men and women will unhesitatingly grant that the question of village uplift is our main problem, for the majority of Indians live in rural areas. Hence, it is the productivity of land which directly determines the economic life, purchasing power, and the wealth of three-quarters of our people. At present the figures of our per capita national income are frankly appalling, for we find that

it averages £5 as compared against £76 of the United Kingdom, and £89 of the U.S.A. Unless this state of affairs is remedied, it will continue to remain the paradox of dire poverty in the midst of plenty

The author in this well written and lucid booklet, first states the various problems that come under the subject of Rural Reconstruction, and then suggests ways and means of rectifying them in order to improve the condition of our citizens and increase the prosperity of the country. He points out that while it is, perhaps impossible to grow adequate quantities of foodstuffs, yet the amounts grown at present are far short of *what can be grown* if better methods of cultivation are employed. From practical experience he proves that small Indian farms can be brought up-to-date and made to yield the maximum with the aid of modern methods of production suited to our condition, rotation of crops and other devices. His chapter on the education of farmer's children is one of the most important in the booklet for it is they who will run rural India of the future

As Dr A. J. Appasamy has written a most explanatory introduction to the topic dealt with in these pages, I propose to avoid repeating what he has already stated so well. Instead, I shall tell you a little about this shy reserved man who said "Must you really use this information about me?" I feel I should, for it will give the reader a better idea of the standing of the author

After graduating from Madras University he went to America where he studied at Harvard University

P R E F A C E

from 1915-1918. With a view to get material for his thesis on "*The Education of the Masses in India*" he visited several leading institutions in New York City and studied their methods of adult education. He also made a special trip to the Hampton Institute in Virginia and made a very careful study of the principles and methods of education adopted there. When the Negro slaves in America were released after the Civil War, General Armstrong founded this Institute to educate them for their new life of freedom. The Hampton Institute has been doing splendid work, and has many lessons to teach those in India, who are interested in the education of the masses, for in many ways we have the same problems to overcome as they. Dr Appasamy summed up the results of his investigation in a series of articles under the title, "A Challenge to India's Educators" which appeared in the "*Young Men of India*"

From 1919-1923 he worked as an advanced student at Oxford University, England, and received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. While there, he wrote a book entitled "*The Sadhu*" in collaboration with a distinguished scholar, Canon B H Streeter (who afterwards became the Provost of Queen's College). This book had a wide circulation in English and was translated into several Indian and European languages. Dr Appasamy spent some time at Toynbee Hall, London, and studied the work of that noted social settlement.

After his return to India, since 1936 he has been devoting all his time to writing and running his centre.

He was a lecturer on the Philosophy of Religion at Bishop's College Calcutta.

In addition to his literary work, Dr Appasamy has been running a rural reconstruction centre in his family village of Rajapudukudy in the Tinnevely District in South India. The activities of the centre, such as the Day School, the Night School for boys and girls, Co-operative Credit Society, the village store in which provisions are sold at reasonable rates, Cottage industries like bee-keeping sugar-cane jaggery making, and palmyra jaggery making are all dealt with in an instructive manner by the author. Improved methods of cultivation are demonstrated on a model farm. Arrangement are made for keeping the village and its surroundings clean, and for providing the people with pure drinking water and good roads. A church ministers to the spiritual needs of the people.

I have written about Dr Appasamy at some length, as he is doing fine work along much needed lines and also because we want our readers to become acquainted with him, as we hope to get him to write for us again, at some future date, on other equally gripping subjects.

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

CHAPTER I

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

What is our main problem? One will say, 'Complete independence' Another will say, 'Hindu-Muslim unity. A friend in America said, 'The education of the masses is the most urgent matter in India today.' Recently I asked a writer, 'What is our main problem?' and he replied, 'Food' I hold that our main problem is the development of our rural areas and the uplift of our villages. This may be regarded as our main problem for two reasons

1 Over ninety per cent. of the people of India live in villages Whatever is done for their uplift, therefore, affects the vast majority of our people.

2 In our rural areas food is raised for the four hundred millions living in India The quantity as well as the quality of this food will determine the stamina and the vitality of our entire population

I may say that any special value which may be attached to this little book must arise from the fact that it is written out of my personal experience and observation. For seven years now I have been running a rural reconstruction centre in the village of Rajapudukudy in Tinnevely District In the course of my tours throughout India, I have also visited and seen for myself various rural reconstruction centres and the work being done in them

It may be said that the problem of village uplift cannot really be solved by running a few rural centres here and there. There are many vital matters to be dealt with. Vast sums of money must be set apart for extending education, well planned and adequately given, to every village in India. There are millions of landless labourers whereas there are hundreds of large estates owned by a few wealthy individuals. The whole matter of the distribution of the land must be carefully attended to. Many holdings are fragmentary and far too small for profitable farming. These must be consolidated so that the farms are large enough to yield adequate returns. The important matter of the taxation of the land, which often runs away with the greater share of the profit which the ryot should enjoy must be firmly decided. The load of debt under which the farmers struggle must be removed, entirely in some cases and in others considerably lightened. Facilities for credit must be made available on a large scale. The principles of scientific farming and modern methods for increasing the produce of the land must be made widely known and the people must be taught to use them in practice. The whole question of the marketing of the produce which is raised in rural areas, so that the man who sweats and tills and ploughs gets the major share of the profit, must be adequately solved. These and many other problems connected with the uplift of villages are very complicated. They can only be dealt with adequately by a State keenly alive to the needs of villages and ready to set apart huge sums of money for their improvement. Many radical laws regarding land tenure and agricultural

debts would have to be passed. Until and unless these things are done, the improvement of rural India will never be effective. All this is quite true. It is absolutely essential that these and other such important matters should be dealt with in a large way. I hope that many of the best minds in the country will devote themselves to thinking out the lines along which progress should take place, carry on such agitation as is necessary and in every possible way work for the introduction of those large reforms which are essential for rural uplift.

In the mean while, such work as is carried on in rural reconstruction centres and as is described in this book has an immense value. The plight of the villagers today is very bad indeed. It may take some time before the day of progress and emancipation dawns. Whatever is done till then, even though on a small scale, to alleviate the sufferings of rural India is welcome.

There is an even more important reason why the work of rural reconstruction centres is valuable. It has been found again and again that the work which has been done by a few individuals on a small scale provides the necessary experience and wisdom for action by the State on a large scale. One of the most interesting men living today is Kagawa, the Japanese social leader and man of letters. As a young man he began running settlements in the slum areas of Japan. The novels which he wrote brought him large royalties and these he used for his social work. When I saw him in 1939 I asked him about these settlements. He said, 'I am not personally responsible for these settlements any longer. The Government has taken over the entire

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

work which I was doing. The conscience of the public was roused and the Japanese Government spent large sums of money in clearing the slum areas and in improving the conditions of the people who lived in them.' This has always happened in social work. A few social workers carry on here and there work in slums or in prisons or among juvenile offenders and gain much valuable experience. The conscience of the public is stirred. The State takes action on a large scale. The lessons learnt by a few individuals working on a small scale are put into nation wide legislation and are backed up by all the vast resources available to the State. The day of small beginnings in rural reconstruction which we see now need not, therefore be despised. A great deal of valuable experience is being accumulated which will prove of inestimable value to future legislators and Government officials.

It is also quite clear that while the State can do things on a large scale there are many things which even the most generous and wide-awake Government can never do. A horse may be taken to the water trough but he must learn to drink from it. Facilities for credit on a large scale may be made available to the farmer but he must learn to make money go the farthest limit and to return the loan when it is due. If he were to use it in drink or in wasteful domestic ceremonies or in extravagant personal habits, the money which has been put at his disposal will be more of a burden than a help. He may have land which he can call his own, but he must have the necessary industry and skill to get the utmost from it. Rural uplift often involves in a vital way the moral factor. Principles of thrift, hard work,

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

character, self-restraint, co-operation and citizenship must be instilled. These essential moral principles will be as necessary under the most favourable economic and social conditions in which a ryot may live as they are today. A beginning must be made immediately in the teaching of these moral principles. This education can never be given up. It must be carried on patiently by men who can devote their highest energies to such work in a selfless spirit. The State cannot, by any Act or grant, bring into existence such workers. Even when the immense resources of the Government are generously made available for rural uplift, such patient and intimate personal work as is being now done in various rural reconstruction centres will continue to be needed.

CHAPTER II

PRODUCE MORE FOOD

As Agriculture is the main source of income in rural areas, the primary effort of the social worker must be to enable the farmer to produce more than he actually does now. The farming methods at present followed in the villages are still primitive. The seeds used are often mixed and not capable of yielding the best harvest. The minimum of manuring is done. The Indian farmer treads the paths which his ancestors followed long ago.

For several decades the Agricultural Department of the Government has run large Agricultural Colleges with their Experimental Laboratories and Demonstration Farms. Those who teach in the Colleges are highly trained men who receive lucrative salaries. Every year from these Colleges agricultural demonstrators and farm managers go out to spread in rural parts what they have learnt from their study and experience.

Though this has gone on for a number of years the results are far from satisfactory. The Agricultural Colleges are run on an expensive scale and the work which is turned out in them is often of an academic character. The highly qualified men who are attached to these Colleges often put forth new ideas which are published long before their value has been amply tested in practice. The complaint is frequently made that the men who graduate from the Colleges are not practical farmers. While they work hard in the Colleges and cram the lectures given to them, they

PRODUCE MORE FOOD

cannot handle a plough or milk a cow They do not come out as keen and enthusiastic farmers. They come out as officials of the Agricultural Department who visit the villages and try from the outside to interest the ryots in new methods Too often they are transferred from one place to another after a short stay. Farming requires a good deal of local knowledge The agricultural demonstrators are shifted rapidly and have no chance of acquiring the local knowledge which is so necessary for successful farming operations In a vast country like India with over seven lakhs of villages there are not enough agricultural demonstrators to cover the entire land and to help the farmers to make use of such scientific methods of farming as have been actually tested and found valuable by the Agricultural Department.

The continuous work of the Agricultural Department with its Research Council and Agricultural Colleges and Experimental Farms, inspite of failures and limitations, has led to the accumulation of a good deal of valuable experience. Several new strains of paddy, sugar-cane, cotton and other crops have been introduced, these are found to yield more than the varieties already in use Various important proposals for preserving cattle manure and raising green manures have been made Simple implements suited to conditions in India, such as inexpensive iron ploughs, have been devised and recommended And yet the large majority of farmers in India have not really profited by the work of the Agricultural Department

What convinced the Indian farmer is actual demonstration Let me give an example About thirty-

five years ago, when I was still a boy I read about the recommendation of the Agricultural Department which urged that far less seed should be used in the seed plots of the paddy fields than the farmers were sowing. The Department held that too much seed was being thrown into the seed plots. This was a waste of money and the results were poor. There were many seedlings, they were transplanted in clusters and the paddy plants which grew up were not as strong and as fertile as they should be. The proposal was, therefore, to use about half of the seed which the farmer was in the habit of sowing. I agree that there may be exceptions to this general rule. In poor soil or fields liable to be flooded practical experience may show that transplanting in clusters is safer. But we may consider that the proposal of the Agricultural Department is on the whole a valuable one. It is generally complained that the methods advocated by the Agricultural Department are expensive and beyond the means of the Indian farmer. There was no question here of additional expenditure. The method recommended by the Department actually made for economy and yet after thirty five years the practice of sowing less seed can not be said to have spread widely.

In localities, however where people have followed the method and found it successful, the results are quite satisfactory. The hobby of Sir Kumarasamy Reddier who rose to be a minister in the Madras Government, was flower gardening. He used to spend a great deal of time and energy in growing large and beautiful flowers. These flowers were exhibited in the Flower Shows and won for him many prizes. When

PRODUCE MORE FOOD

he retired from active life he turned his attention from flower-gardening to paddy cultivation. With the same zeal with which he had cultivated flowers he now raised paddy crops. He read such books as were available on the subject. He got into touch with the agricultural officers in the neighbourhood and found out what they had to recommend. He told me that he followed in his own seed-plots the methods advocated by the Agricultural Department and that the difference in the output was quite striking. Because of the fewer seeds he put in, the plants which grew up were stronger and healthier and yielded far more. He also told me that when this method was found to work satisfactorily in his own fields many of the farmers in the locality began to adopt it. What leaflets and lectures and advice by the agricultural officers failed to do, actual demonstration in a particular farm achieved. Because they saw, they believed, and because they believed, they followed. An ounce of example was better than a ton of precept.

I came across another illustration of the same kind. There was a large tank with a great deal of black, rich silt. This silt was good manure, but practically no one made use of it. A farmer in that village carted to his fields several hundred cartloads of the silt. The results were clear. The crop in the fields where the silt had been thrown was heavy and abundant. Immediately many of the farmers in that locality followed his example. They also carted hundreds of cartloads of the same rich silt to their own fields. The silt had always been available in the tank. The farmers even knew that it

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

would be quite good if it could be put into their fields or gardens. There were many days in the year when their carts and bulls were without work and could have been easily set to removing the silt without additional expenditure. And yet no one had done this so far. When one man did it and the yield was encouraging, others followed his example.

The main effort of the social worker in rural areas must be to see that model farms are run in every possible area. I note that a good many rural reconstruction centres tend to concentrate on subsidiary industries. This is not as it should be. It may be far easier to teach subsidiary industries than to improve agriculture. But then cottage industries can never give the rich results which improved agriculture can. The main sources of the ryots' income must be increased. Model farms may be attached to rural reconstruction centres or schools or the lands of public-spirited farmers of means who could afford to set apart some portion of their property for experimental and demonstration purposes. I quite realize that running a Demonstration Farm is not an easy task. The persons who are doing so must be men of education with a progressive outlook. They must have practical experience in cultivation. They must have considerable money for capital outlay and current expenses. They must also be prepared to run risks. Whatever the difficulties may be, only such actual demonstration will enable the farmer to produce more and to get more out of his lands. I understand there are at present 507 Experimental Farms with numerous branches in Russia.

PRODUCE MORE FOOD

Once I was speaking along these lines to a group of educated men in Bombay. They took strong exception to the statement that the Indian farmer could learn anything from the new methods recommended by the Agricultural Department. For one thing, they held that the ryots were too poor to follow any new-fangled ideas. They were struggling hard to keep body and soul together and it was too much to expect them to launch out on new enterprises involving risks or losses. For another thing, the farmers were quite experts in their own line. They had been ploughing and tilling for generations and their methods were the most adequate for the soil and for the local conditions. There was nothing modern science could teach them which they did not know already from practical experience. I was surprised at the line which that educated group took.

It is quite true that in many ways the Indian farmer is good at his job. He has learnt a great deal from practical experience. The methods which he follows are safe and to a point, profitable. He has extraordinary patience, and, in spite of frequent losses, he passionately believes in land. But it is untrue to say that his methods cannot be improved or that scientific farming has no place in rural India.

If my readers are inclined to think that there is nothing in scientific farming, I would like to call their attention to a most interesting book entitled, *Harvest from the Desert* (Sir Ganga Ram Trust, Lahore, Price Rs 3-8). It reads like a romance. Sir Ganga Ram was a distinguished engineer in Government service until his fifty-second year. He held many important posts,

one of which involved the responsibility for the practical arrangements connected with the Delhi Durbar held by Lord Curzon. In his fifty-second year he resigned his job because of his disappointment at not being promoted and took to practical farming on a large scale. He wanted to buy land. That needed a capital of Rs 28 000. This amount he did not have with him though he had been drawing a fairly large salary as an engineer. He borrowed part of this sum to supplement what he had on hand and began his farming operations. When he died after about twenty four years he had earned such huge profits from his agricultural work that he was able to devote about thirty lakhs to various charities such as a Widows Home, a Hospital, a Home for the Aged and Poor, a Business College and so on. His success was due to his tremendous energy and enterprise. He made a careful study of farming methods all over the world. He ploughed well and manured heavily, he sowed the best seeds, he used the latest machinery, he increased enormously the facilities for irrigation. The yield in his fields was several times that in the ordinary farmer's lands.

What Sir Ganga Ram achieved reveals very clearly the possibilities of scientific farming here in India. We read of the astounding success of scientific farming in America and in Russia. But this information does not come home to us. We think that what is possible in Russia is not necessarily true of India. Of course Sir Ganga Ram was an exceptional man. He had an amazingly progressive mind and had the ability to go to the heart of things. He was a man of extraordinary

PRODUCE MORE FOOD

energy He had abundant resources and could carry on his work on a scale which few Indian farmers could command It was mostly virgin soil he was dealing with, but the vast bulk of agricultural land in India has been intensively cultivated for centuries and there are definite limits to the response it will make to scientific methods of production While granting all this, his example is a revelation of what is possible in farming in India, even under the exceedingly difficult political and economical conditions which prevail here He would be a bold man who holds, after reading this book, that scientific farming cannot make any difference in India.

There is another important way by which farmers in India can be taught scientific cultivation and that is to 'catch them young' In all village schools, especially in all Higher Elementary Schools and High Schools in rural areas, the teaching of Agriculture should form an essential part of education I shall write about this matter at some length in the chapter called 'The Rural Bias in Education'

CHAPTER III

HOW COTTAGE INDUSTRIES HELP

In recent years Mahatma Gandhi has thrown the weight of his personality on the side of cottage industries. He has pointed out that there are some months in the year when the farmer is idle and that he can add to his income by practising one or more cottage industries. I spent some days in Wardha seeing the work of the All India Village Industries' Association. There were several students gathered together from all parts of India. They lived in simple rural surroundings and had plain food. Everyday they spun for an hour or so. They learnt one or two of the various industries which were taught in the place such as paper making, gurmaking, oil pressing, bee-keeping and so on. After they complete their course at Wardha they would be scattered all over the country and carry on the work of developing village industries, receiving just about enough salary (Rs. 10 per month or so) to enable them to live. There were two highly trained men Dr J. C. Kumarappa and Dr Bharathan Kumarappa who also lived the same simple life as the students, lectured on the theoretical aspects of rural economics and devoted the major share of their time to handling inquiries from various parts of India about village industries and giving suitable advice. The large Village Industries Museum, organized by the Association, contains many interesting exhibits and is well worth seeing.

A hot debate has been going on in India for some time about the comparative worth of large-scale and

HOW COTTAGE INDUSTRIES HELP

small-scale industries It is generally recognized that the enormous development of large-scale industries in the West has been in many ways the cause of her moral and spiritual ruin Huge industrial cities have sprung up in the West where millions of people are gathered together and live under the most congested and cramping conditions Men and women cease to be human beings and become parts of a large industrial plant, for hours on end they keep producing a small part of some machine and have no opportunity to exercise any individual skill or creative impulse The raw materials needed for these factories have to be obtained in enormous quantities and nations become involved in devastating wars to obtain colonies where such raw materials can be got The development of machinery on a large scale has dispensed with a good deal of human labour and before the second World War there were millions of unemployed men and women and the problem of unemployment became grave and menacing

Gandhiji and others rightly feel that the evils of industrialism on a large scale should not be repeated in India It would be a pity if huge industrial cities spring up in India and drain off all our best people from the villages It is true that at the present day the development of large-scale industries cannot be wholly stopped We may go even further In such matters as mining and railways and—to some extent—in textiles, large-scale industries are absolutely necessary for the welfare of the country But in addition to these large-scale industries, small-scale industries must be fully developed in a country where the majority of the people live in villages

Thousands of villages in India are situated in the cotton growing areas. We have the curious phenomenon of some of the cotton raised in India going all the way to England and coming back in the form of finished goods. Why should not the villager spin and weave his own clothes from the cotton raised by his hands in his own neighbourhood? After food clothes are the most essential need of man. Whatever enables a villager to clothe himself decently is a priceless boon. The primary objection which is urged against this is that India's four hundred million people cannot really be clothed in this way. Only large-scale production can adequately meet the demand for clothes which such a large population makes. This is quite true. But this does not mean that wherever possible men and women who practise hand spinning and hand weaving in India should not provide their own clothes.

In the most highly industrial countries of the West like Germany or America, I have seen plenty of women, even in the best social circles, knitting jerseys whenever there is a little time to spare. After the day's work is over or in some informal meeting women would be busy knitting. For a small sum they could go and buy a jersey in any clothes store and yet every spare moment is put by millions of women in Western lands into knitting. This is partly for economy and partly for the joy of creating with one's own skill and labour a garment for one's personal use. If this is true of the people of the West, the majority of whom are in affluent circumstances certainly as compared with the poverty stricken masses of India why should it not be possible in our country?

HOW COTTAGE INDUSTRIES HELP

In every village there are people who are only too glad to earn a little additional income by spinning. There are women who cannot, for social or other reasons, go and work in the fields. There are men who are starving and who would be glad to spin if they are taught how and suitable arrangements are made for the weaving or sale of the yarn which they produce. Much effective work is being done along this line in various rural reconstruction centres. Social workers are able to organize spinning among hundreds of people. I recently heard of a worker who organized spinning among three hundred people. This, of course, is not much in a vast country like India but if hundreds of social workers in various parts of the country do such excellent work, the improvement in the economic condition of our villages will be striking. The weaving of cloth from hand-spun yarn is quite difficult but here again remarkable success has crowned the efforts of many village workers. In important centres in every taluk in India weaving centres should be established and they must produce cloth from hand-spun yarn.

The moral effect of well-organized spinning and weaving in any village is impressive. Much futile idleness disappears. Quarrels, of which there is plenty in rural parts, diminished when there is work to do. The clothes and money which come in, though they may not be much, add to the self-respect of the workers.

Poultry is another cottage industry which has been tried in many rural reconstruction centres with great success. Eggs which are laid by foreign birds like White Leghorns or Rhode Island Reds are more nume-

rous and are heavier than those laid by the Indian birds. There are many difficulties connected with running such a poultry establishment. The improved breeds have to be segregated from the village poultry. Where it is possible the village cocks and hens must be killed off. There is often much loss when the birds of the better breed are swept away wholesale in an epidemic. Most people say that at such times there is practically no way of preventing loss. In spite of such disasters improved poultry adds to the income of the villager. If he can be persuaded to eat the eggs which he produces, there will be a marked improvement in his stamina and vitality.

Bee-keeping has come to stay as a cottage industry in India. In fertile parts of the country like Travancore bee-keeping is very successful. I understand that around Marthandah in Travancore there are as many as 2,000 hives and that each hive gives an average yield of about Rs. 10 worth of honey every year. In other areas bee-keeping is not so prosperous. There must be plenty of pasturage for the bees. Wherever there is cultivation bee-keeping is possible though not always on a large scale. The bees constantly swarm away and even the best bee-keepers complain that their colonies leave them in spite of the utmost precautions. I know a village teacher who has done good work in bee-keeping. He has about a dozen bee-hives of his own and looks after also other people's bee-hives. By carefully rearing his colonies he managed to get plenty of honey and to sell it. He got an income of Rs. 10 per month from this source, quite an addition to his pittance as a teacher. Immediately after the rains I saw him and

HOW COTTAGE INDUSTRIES HELP

he was in much distress. Several of his colonies had swarmed away though he had done all he could.

The difficulties notwithstanding, bee-keeping is a valuable industry. The medical value of honey has always been recognised in India though it is almost next to impossible to buy pure honey untouched by hand in our Indian bazaars. If bee-keeping becomes more common than it is now, as it fairly well bids to do, at least there will be far more pure honey for medical purposes than at present. In fertile tracts or in large gardens honey can be produced in large quantities, though there are several months in the year such as the rainy season when the bees do not gather any honey. The food value of honey is now being generally recognised and if there is more honey available in the country a great many people, especially in the middle class, will take to it and use it as they are now in the habit of using *ghee*.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that a great deal of the honey now found in flowers and not put to any human use is being gathered and made available for food. At present if village boys discover a bee-hive in the hollow of a tree or anywhere else they drive away the bees, destroy the hives and drink the honey. If, however, the colonies are transferred to well-constructed bee-hives according to modern methods the colonies keep on thriving and store up a lot of honey which can be used for human consumption. My own conclusion as a result of practical experience is, however, that in the average village in India not more than a dozen or two dozen bee-hives can flourish. There does not seem to be enough pasturage for a greater number of colo-

nies. What I have said, however does not hold true of fertile provinces like Bengal and Travancore where there is luxuriant vegetation and where bees can have no lack of pasturage.

The hand pounding of rice is useful as an additional source of income to the villager. It is a great pity that the rice mill is invading the countryside. Rural workers will have to do a great deal of energetic organization for the hand pounding of rice before the land becomes flooded with rice mills.

Gur making is another valuable cottage industry. I know parts of the country where thousands of palmyrah trees stand untapped and where there is a great deal of potential jaggery going to waste. Here again much good can be done by rural workers. If some money could be found for initial expenses such as pots and pans and the wages of the workers until the jaggery is sold, the industry could be developed a great deal.

CHAPTER IV

BUY AND SELL CO-OPERATIVELY

The economic need of Indian villages is two-fold. First, there is the need to produce more. Of that I have already written in Chapters II and III. Then there is the need to get a higher price for what is produced. (In this chapter I shall write about this.)

The ryot in the Indian villages is always in debt. Let us suppose he grows cotton on some land of his own and has a pair of bulls. Some time before the cultivation begins he may have to change his bulls, he has to buy seeds, he has to pay coolies who help him at the time of ploughing and sowing, he has to get additional hands for weeding and picking the cotton, he has to pay taxes. When the crop is getting ready he and the members of his family have to live. For all these purposes he has to possess ready cash, which he generally does not have. So he borrows from a money-lender, often mortgaging the crop for several months in advance. The money-lender charges him a heavy rate of interest—anywhere from eighteen to thirty-six per cent, according to the urgency of the need, the credit of the borrower and the period of the loan. By the time the crop is actually ready a heavy debt is incurred. Probably the money-lender takes over the crop himself, fixing the lowest price for it or the ryot has to sell all the crop at the harvest time when prices stand lowest. He will be lucky if after paying

back the loan he has still some cash on hand to carry him on for a few weeks.

Co-operative Societies for buying and selling must be started on a large-scale. Every group of villages must have a Co-operative Loan and Sale Society in which all the produce in that neighbourhood is bought and stored up to be sold for a reasonable price when the market is good. Until the sale is actually made loans must be given to the farmer from time to time to help him in his domestic or agricultural expenses. On such loans a reasonable interest may be charged. When the produce is sold the money which is due to the farmer after his loans are paid off should be duly given to him. By this method there will be a great deal of saving the interest which he pays will not be heavy and the produce will not be sold under pressure when the market is dull.

It is also essential that co-operative arrangements should be made for buying stores. The shop-keeper in a little village at some distance from the weekly market is apt to charge an exorbitant price, especially when he allows credit. A co-operative organization where food stuffs, clothes and other essential articles are available at reasonable prices is a great help.

A society for co-operative buying and selling needs a building of some size in which goods can be stored safely. If there is no such building in the village a new building would have to be constructed and the initial expenditure would be high perhaps far beyond the resources of the village. There may have to be one or more paid men according to the size of the society to devote their entire time everyday to buying and selling. This again would be a real difficulty until the society is well established and there is thriving business.

BUY AND SELL CO-OPERATIVELY

Co-operative Societies for credit purposes are needed everywhere. There are so many objects for which credit is desired—the purchase of bulls, the sinking of wells or the building of houses. If a number of people in a village join together and send an application to the Co-operative Officer concerned, a Co-operative Credit Society can easily come into existence and money can be borrowed from a District Co-operative Bank and disbursed as loans. If the loans to the members are given out carefully, collected duly and returned regularly to the District Bank, there is no reason why a Co-operative Credit Society should not function successfully. People in the villages take loans gaily but when it comes to returning them there are all sorts of delays and difficulties. In many places the President and the Secretary often tend to receive loans for their own individual ends and do not consult the needs of all the members.

I have not said anything about family debts or long standing debts. They are a real problem. I was impressed with their magnitude when visiting Lalitadripur outside the city of Mysore. In this village the late Maharaja took a great deal of personal interest, himself riding there occasionally. Under his immediate patronage rural reconstruction work was carried on in the village. The Maharaja found that many of the people in the village were bearing heavy loads of debts. He arranged that all the debts of the people in the village should be paid off and that they should return the loans to him in easy instalments. It was found that altogether the villagers owed over Rs 24,595. This sum, of course, was easily found for them. But the trouble began when the various loans which had been made to the people had to be returned. Some repaid faithfully whatever they could, others

were unable to return anything because they did not have even jobs so jobs had to be arranged for them in the palace as gardeners or as peons. This instance brings up vividly the heavy load of debt under which people in the villages are suffering. Long-standing debts with accumulated interest can be dealt with adequately only by legislation. In South India the Agriculturists' Relief Act has removed several long standing debts, but people now find it either quite impossible to get new loans or get them in all sorts of devious ways to defeat the provisions of the law.

The value of the co-operative movement has been demonstrated afresh by the immense development of Co-operative Societies in China in recent years. An excellent account of this work is found in Srimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyas *In War Torn China* (Padma Publications). The Japanese bombed and destroyed the large Chinese factories on the coast. The people fled into the interior. They lost all their worldly possessions and had to begin anew. They joined together and formed Co-operative Societies to pool such slender resources as they had and began manufacturing the numerous articles which both the military and the civilian population of China needed. These co-operative organizations were in many cases small and poorly financed but the will to succeed was behind them and they were amazingly prosperous.

I heard a most interesting lecture on Co-operative Societies by Kagawa, the Japanese leader. He is an intensely alive and alert man and illustrates all his points with pictures and figures which he draws

BUY AND SELL CO-OPERATIVELY

rapidly on the black-board. He began his life as a social worker. After running settlements for some years he realized that he was dealing with immense social problems only on the surface and that they must be tackled radically. He went to America and made a careful study of Politics and Economics to find out the root causes of poverty and how they could be removed. From being a social worker he became an expert in Politics and Economics. He has written a book entitled, *Brotherhood Economics*, in which he sets forth the co-operative movement as an effective alternative to Marxian Communism. He described seven types of co-operative organizations in Japan—Insurance Co-operatives, Producers' Co-operatives, Marketing Co-operatives, Credit Co-operatives, Mutual Aid Co-operatives, Utilities Co-operatives and Consumers' Co-operatives. The record of their value and usefulness is splendid.

The Co-operative Movement has not been a great success in India. There seem to be many reasons for this. The movement has been imposed on the country from outside, it has not been a people's movement. The Co-operative Department of the Government seeks to control too much the activities of the Co-operative Societies affiliated to it, far too much red-tape prevails.

The Co-operative spirit is inherent in the Indian village community. To this day there is a definite and clear group-consciousness. The blacksmiths, the potters and the carpenters are the servants of the village and are all paid in kind by the ryots at the

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

harvest time. If there is a sacrifice in the village all the people contribute to it. If some offence has been committed the people come together and try by arbitration to settle the matter. There is a feeling of loyalty to the village and the leaders in it. The inherent co-operative spirit of the Indian village must be instilled into organizations for co-operative buying and selling and other such purposes which make for the common good of the village.

CHAPTER V.

A RURAL BASIS TO EDUCATION

At present there is no difference between education given in a school in a large city and that given in a village school. The children in a city school are in a different environment and will grow up to be men and women holding various urban jobs. The children in a village will most of them become ryots in later years. It is, therefore, necessary that all the education given in a village school should be closely related to the rural environment in which the children live and fit them to be competent farmers in future years.

The main way in which this can be done is by having a good school farm in which the children can actually learn from practice many of the things which are necessary for a progressive farmer. The Education Department insists upon school gardens but most school gardens are a farce. Before the inspector is expected a few seeds are put in and a patch of green is shown to him.

I have seen, however, some really good school gardens. I should like to describe here in detail an excellent farm at Katpadi, North Arcot District, attached to the Higher Elementary School, there, though I realize that in many directions it is far beyond what can really be accomplished in a village school farm. The Katpadi farm, however, exhibits in a notable way the possibilities of a school farm. Once I spent a month on the farm studying carefully the various ways in which the boys are educated. The

head of the farm is Mr J J Devalois a graduate in Agriculture from one of the American Colleges, who has devoted several years of valuable services to rural reconstruction work in India. All the buildings—the church, the class rooms the living rooms, the cattle sheds and the poultry houses—are inexpensively built with thatched roofs but are kept clean and attractive and fit in well into their rural surroundings. The farm itself is extensive, about 175 acres though all of it is not under cultivation. The soil is very poor but the best possible use is made of it. Recently some more land has been acquired with an excellent supply of water and this has added considerably to the value of the farm. Practically every type of cultivation is carried on so as to enable the boys to have an all round view of farming. There are fruit trees vegetables are grown dry and wet crops of various kinds are raised. Several pairs of cattle are kept and their manure is preserved according to scientific methods stud bulls are maintained a large and flourishing poultry yard has several hundred birds. The boys work in fields every morning for a couple of hours and also some evenings. To the youngest boy as well as to the oldest some practical work is given. As it is only a Higher Elementary School and the boys are quite young all the heavier work is done by the servants attached to the farm. In the school the boys receive instruction about different kinds of soil different kinds of manure different kinds of crops, different kinds of implements and so forth.

A RURAL BASIS TO EDUCATION

Mr. Devalois has some interesting theories. He holds that every one should drink milk, but as cow's milk is expensive at least goat's milk should be used. He calls the goat 'the poor man's cow.' The raising of an improved breed of goats is a special feature of the Katpadi farm. He also believes that the habit of eating fruit should spread widely, even among the poorest classes. Papaya is a cheap fruit. The trees grow rapidly and bear abundant fruit. If they are planted along the water courses in a garden they need no special irrigation. There are some fine varieties of Papaya in the Katpadi farm. The Papaya will not, however, grow in wind-swept areas as the trunk of the tree is quite weak and slender.

It is certainly necessary that all the High Schools and all the Higher Elementary Schools in rural areas should have farms attached to them. The chief reason why the improved methods of Agriculture, which the Agricultural Department seeks to inculcate, are not adopted is that the present generation of ryots is too set in its ways to learn anything new. Our hope lies with the new generation. The children of ryots living in rural areas must be made familiar with the theory as well as the practice of scientific farming from their earliest years. They must use improved seeds, they must handle new implements, they must rotate crops, they must preserve manure. In fact, all the essential principles connected with intensive and profitable cultivation along scientific lines must be imparted to them as they grow up, both in the class room and in the school farm.

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

I quite realize the immense difficulties connected with this proposal. A school farm is costly. Even a small farm will involve a heavy expenditure, both in capital outlay and for running expenses. For instance, a school farm of five acres will approximately involve the following items of expenditure

	Rs.
Land	800
Preparation for cultivation	200
Well	500
Bulls	200
Other expenses	300
<hr/>	
Total	Rs. 2,000
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Every year there will be recurring expenses

	Rs.
One gardener	150
Maintenance of bulls	120
Other expenses	30
<hr/>	
Total	Rs. 300
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This sum may not be beyond the reach of a High School. When I was talking about the heavy expenditure involved in running a school farm a friend who has been in charge of a High School for a number of years said, 'Why?' We have to spend much more money in teaching Science and in providing the necessary apparatus for it. There are not enough High Schools in rural areas to reach a large number

A RURAL BASIS TO EDUCATION

of boys, so to every Higher Elementary School a school farm must be attached. It is only when a sufficient number of boys going through Higher Elementary Schools in village parts become familiar with improved methods of cultivation will there be any perceptible change in the methods of farming in India.

It is rather curious that though in the Wardha Scheme of education, outlined by Mahatma Gandhi, gardening is one of the crafts with which education may be closely related, as far as I have been able to enquire in no school has gardening been practically adopted as such a craft. There are, of course, many schools working along Wardha lines where spinning is made the craft with which the education of the children is closely linked.

The money for starting a school farm must somehow be found. How do people manage to get money for putting up a school building? For a village school a farm is as essential as a building. When once the farm begins to run it may be expected to pay for itself. After all the produce from a farm of five acres should easily bring in about Rs 300/- per year to meet the recurring expenses. In the farm attached to the High School at Gooty the cows are a profitable source of income. Some of them were bought for a low price as calves and they are now yielding milk. The sale of the milk is so good that practically all the expenses of the farm are met out of the proceeds.

There is another difficulty, the lack of suitable teachers. At present the graduates of Agricultural Colleges can be employed only by the High Schools.

as their scale of salary is fairly high. Even if men of such type are available their agricultural training is of an academic character and they are not able to become enthusiastic farmers themselves or create in others an enthusiasm for farming. In the rural areas there are many people who are imbued with the love of the land and who will take to Agriculture with real joy and interest. But they have not at present any scientific training. Whatever flair they have for Agriculture is not developed so as to bear rich and abiding fruit. If all over India the teaching of Agriculture along scientific lines becomes an essential subject in all schools in village areas there will be no lack of competent teachers. A good deal can also be done, as in the Community School at Erode, to give practical work and theoretical instruction in Agriculture to men who are being trained as teachers.

Then there is another difficulty—the conflict of ideologies. The farmer sends his children to the school only when they are young. As soon as they are a little grown up that is, when they are nine or ten they are put in charge of cattle or sheep or they are made to help in the irrigation of gardens. Girls likewise, as soon as they are grown up are asked to stay at home and to help the mother with the babies or in the kitchen. If a man makes up his mind to send his son to school for a number of years he expects that he will grow up wear clean clothes become a teacher or a clerk and rise as he considers it in the social scale. He does not think that after some years of education the boy will return to the land and

A RURAL BASIS TO EDUCATION

cultivate it as he himself has done. The ryot's idea is that work on the land does not need any education. If a boy goes to school he must get a decent job and work under different conditions. It will take a long time before he gives up this idea. If boys who have gone through school or college return to the village with an adequate scientific training for Agriculture and make a real success of cultivation there will be a marked difference in the attitude of the ryot towards this matter.

CHAPTER VI

FROM LITERACY TO KNOWLEDGE

One hears a great deal these days about the universal need for literacy and various quick methods by which it may be attained. While, of course we must rejoice if there is a real possibility of making all people in India literate speedily it is better to recognize certain important facts. As the result of my practical experience doubts and difficulties about these quick methods of literacy are, in the main, three

(1) It is one thing to make a person recognize a few important words in reading books in clear type but it is another thing to enable him to get to the stage when he can take a newspaper or a simple book and read it for himself with genuine pleasure and derive some profit from it. I once asked a class of boys who had been coming to a Night School for some months to take a newspaper and to read for me a paragraph or two. Not one of them was able to do this. In many ways a newspaper is hard to read, especially for a village lad. The type is very small. There are many technical expressions about current events such as 'the Axis nations' or 'the Atlantic Charter' with which every educated man is familiar but the meaning of which is quite beyond a village lad who is just beginning to read. A great deal of geographical and historical knowledge is assumed on the part of the newspaper reader. And yet if literacy

FROM LITERACY TO KNOWLEDGE

does not lead at least to the ability to read a newspaper for one's self, what is the use?

(2) When once literacy is attained it does not mean that it remains an achievement for the rest of a person's life without any further exertion. I read recently that about thirty-three per cent of the boys and girls in India who reach the literate stage in their village schools lapse into illiteracy. In a village of about seven hundred people where an elementary school had been running for over thirty years I found only about a dozen people able to sign their own names and of these only about half a dozen were able to read a simple book or write a letter. The exact figures cannot be easily reached, but every social worker will agree with me in thinking that the lapse into illiteracy in our villages is enormous. Even children, who go to school for two or three years and learn to read soon forget all that they learnt at school if they are not specially helped to keep up their literacy. The task of the social worker in rural areas, then, is not merely to teach people, whether old or young, to become literate but also to enable them to remain literate. In some ways this latter task is even more difficult than the former. The work of making a person literate can be accomplished in a comparatively short time whereas the work of keeping him literate has to cover the whole of his life.

(3) And this is my third point. There must be a steady progress from literacy to knowledge, even knowledge of the most rudimentary kind. No high road leads from literacy to knowledge. In many ways

A daily paper will be of great help in adding interest to the work of the Night School. An intelligent teacher can find plenty of material in a newspaper for keeping awake the mind and attention of his pupils. In the earlier stages he would himself explain in his own words the interesting items in the paper. As the pupils advance in their education he would make them read here and there in the paper and add such comments and explanations of his own as are necessary for elucidation.

Besides the Night School, the Rural Library is a valuable agency for keeping up the literacy of those who have already attended school and for helping them to get a little more knowledge and a little clearer understanding of things. For those whose capacity for reading is very limited, special books for semi literates should be prepared. They should be written in the simplest possible words, they should be fully illustrated and they should be brief. For those who have begun to read with ease and pleasure other books would have to be provided. Stories, adventures, biographies of heroes and religious books will all be found useful. I find that in some villages books about Agriculture, about cattle breeding about health and about sanitation are in real demand.

In large villages in India the radio has now come to be installed. The time will soon come when every village of any size will have its own radio. There is endless profit and entertainment from a radio. A friend recently made an interesting suggestion. He said "In Africa the railway has been skipped and

FROM LITERACY TO KNOWLEDGE

from the camel people have gone on to the aeroplane." In India a similar way the written word may be skipped. People may advance from ignorance to knowledge through the spoken word of the radio'. We have to remember that in India especially, of all countries in the world, the ear has been almost the main avenue through which education spread rather than the eye. In learned circles hundreds of stanzas were committed to memory and manuscripts were few and often rare. The professional singer and storyteller, who himself may be a learned man and may pore over his books during the day, will in the evening chant stanzas from an Epic or *Purana* and explain them and there may be large or small groups of people listening to his exposition. The size and interest of these groups will vary according to the nature of the subject, the method of exposition and the gifts possessed by the speaker. In any case learning was imparted through the ear rather than through the eye. Perhaps there is something in what my friend said. It may be that in dealing with vast masses of uneducated people we can achieve quicker results through the radio than through the printed word.

Of course, it will be a pity to ignore the printed word or to work for education without literacy and reading altogether. The programme from any Radio Station has to be very simple so as to attract the interest of millions of people. Talks of an educational character are as brief as possible and the knowledge gained can never be quite accurate. If a point is not grasped it cannot be read over again to make sure of its meaning.

If a question or doubt rises in the mind it cannot be solved by a teacher who is present and is willing to help you. If you listen for a couple of hours there are so many items that will not appeal to you a variety of tastes on the part of the listeners has to be catered to. These facts notwithstanding one feels that the wireless will no doubt play a very important part in the coming years in the education of people in rural areas who are away from all the benefits and opportunities of cities and who are just as anxious as the people of the urban areas to know something of the world and its ways

CHAPTER VII

THE LEISURE HOURS

I realized the immense importance of organized recreation during leisure hours when a few street lamps were put up in the little village where we have been carrying on rural reconstruction work. Under flickering lights the young people of the village began to play different games and to enjoy themselves. Every moonlight night one realizes the need for well-planned recreation in villages. On dark nights most people retire to their huts. There is little life or movement about, except for a noisy quarrel or a drunken fight there seems to be nothing going on. Moonlight nights are different. The young people of the village have a jolly time, playing and shouting. This shows how essential it is to organize in the villages entertaining and useful recreation during the evenings. The life of a villager is all too busy and serious through the day. He wakes up early in the morning, goes to his fields immediately and begins work with the dawn. Except for a short break in the middle of a day he plods along during the greater part of the day. Every effort, therefore, which seeks to put a little joy into his life is welcome.

In villages which can afford a separate building a community house must be put up in which, especially in the evening hours, various types of recreation, entertainment and popular education may be carried on. Most villages, however, cannot afford to build a sepa-

places where borehole latrines are popular in the backyards of houses or in private gardens. Such latrines are used only by the members of the family and can always be kept clean.

At least a few street lights are essential in every village. Without such lights deep gloom settles down on a village after night fall. I have found in my experience that there is no purpose for which the people of a village are more willing to contribute than the setting up of village lights or their maintenance. There is a universal appeal about light. In connection with worship it is often found that the offerings which village people make most often are lamps and oil for lighting them. Light has been all along the ages a great symbol of God's power to awaken our hearts and minds. Men everywhere have prayed to be led from darkness to light. As to whether the people in our villages are consciously aware of this fact or no the attractiveness of light to them is clear. The day will soon come when electricity will be available even in small villages. Already many villages have a supply of electric power. A few electric lights in each village, when they do become possible will make a lot of difference to the general comfort and habits of the people in rural areas. During the day time they are unusually favoured because they are in direct contact with nature. They work in the open fields where the winds blow they see plants and trees sprout up, grow and die the vast open spaces, the sunrises and the sunsets, the avenues of trees, the fields with the ripening paddy the tanks with their sheets of water—

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

In small villages, the teacher could be provided with a medicine chest and asked to dispense a few simple remedies as the need arises

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

work of the rural leader should be carried on with a view to enable the villager to know where to look for any information he might require to perform in the most effective way the main calling of the country side, namely Agriculture and to learn to put to good account the spirit of co-operation which is inherent in our people and which is now running to waste. The rural leader before he can inspire the village to function at its highest, must set up a high example himself. The model farm for each rural centre should be his responsibility though he may have expert help. In the same way the Adult School should be his charge. He should organize classes for the intelligent discussion of news and run the Village Library. In such activities as those of the local co-operatives he should be the guiding spirit. He should realize further that the task of the rural worker is not merely educational and economic but also moral and spiritual. He should teach the people of the village to have deep faith in God and to derive continual nourishment from the regular worship of Him. Our love for God must become evidence in our love of man. Religion must touch and affect every phase of rural society.

A great deal can be done in our Colleges to awaken in the new generation a real interest in village uplift. What is being achieved by the Madras Christian College at Tambaram is a striking testimony to the possibilities of such work. The Madras Christian College is fortunately placed. It is outside the city limits, having its own ample grounds and surrounded by several villages within easy reach. The College is at a

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

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fortunate in having on its staff Dr. Malcolm Adiseshiah who has made a special study of Economics and who is keenly alive to the value of rural work. On the College premises cottage industries such as the hand-pounding of rice, paper-making, spinning and gardening are carried on. Workers from the villages in the neighbourhood come everyday and are engaged in these various cottage industries. All the rice which is needed for the hostels is bought in large quantities and several people are kept busy everyday in pounding this rice. With the demand for paper so great, the paper-making in the College is quite a thriving business though it is carried on in a small way. There are several village workers who earn a little everyday by spinning. A plot of twenty acres has also been set apart for a garden, where various crops are raised. About fifty people are thus provided with employment every day.

The students of the College raise voluntary contributions which amount to something like Rs. 2,000/- per year to finance this undertaking. On some occasions students have fasted from single meals and turned over the money thus saved to the funds of the rural reconstruction work. If all the boys of a hostel fast for a single meal they are able to hand over Rs. 30/- to the social work. Two social workers devote their whole time to organizing and running the cottage industries. They are new graduates who receive their food free from the hostels and get a small allowance of Rs. 15/- per mensem for their clothes and pocket expenses.

OUR MAIN PROBLEM

The students of the College go out regularly into the neighbouring villages. They do much first-aid work, they have some simple remedies in their medicine-chest and are able to give some badly needed relief. They explain to the people of the villages what is happening in the world outside and try to awaken in them self respect and a vital interest in present day affairs. If there are any lands in the neighbourhood which can be obtained from the Government for the purposes of cultivation the teachers make the necessary efforts and obtain a grant of such lands. When once grants of land are secured, the actual assignment is made by the local Panchayats which have also been organized by the College. The students of Economics are furnished with questionnaires and the work in the class room is closely related to the social service.

In this way scores of students are getting linked up with the villages. We may well expect that some of these students will have their interest so quickened that they will probably settle down in villages after they finish their College work and devote their entire time to such service. Other students may not become rural workers themselves but whatever profession they may follow they may take a keen interest in rural work and help it in all possible ways. If the work which is done in the Madras Christian College could be followed in all the Colleges of India wherever there are opportunities of this type we may expect a large band of rural workers to emerge from among our college students.

The question of training rural workers will have to

THE TRAINING OF RURAL WORKERS

be tackled seriously. Here and there rural workers are being trained for short periods such as at Marthandam but there are not enough of such institutions. A great many more schools for rural workers would have to be started all over the country.

In a well-ordered self-governing India, the training of rural workers would be the responsibility of the Government. The Government would select them carefully, train them adequately, provide them with the minimum of money necessary for capital equipment and give them freedom to carry out their ideas. The village, whose public spirit has been roused, would do the rest, such as finding the money for running expenses by voluntary contributions. Until such a wide net-work of training institutions for rural leaders is brought into existence by the Government, private agencies must as far as possible start such training centres and run them as adequately as their finances permit.

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